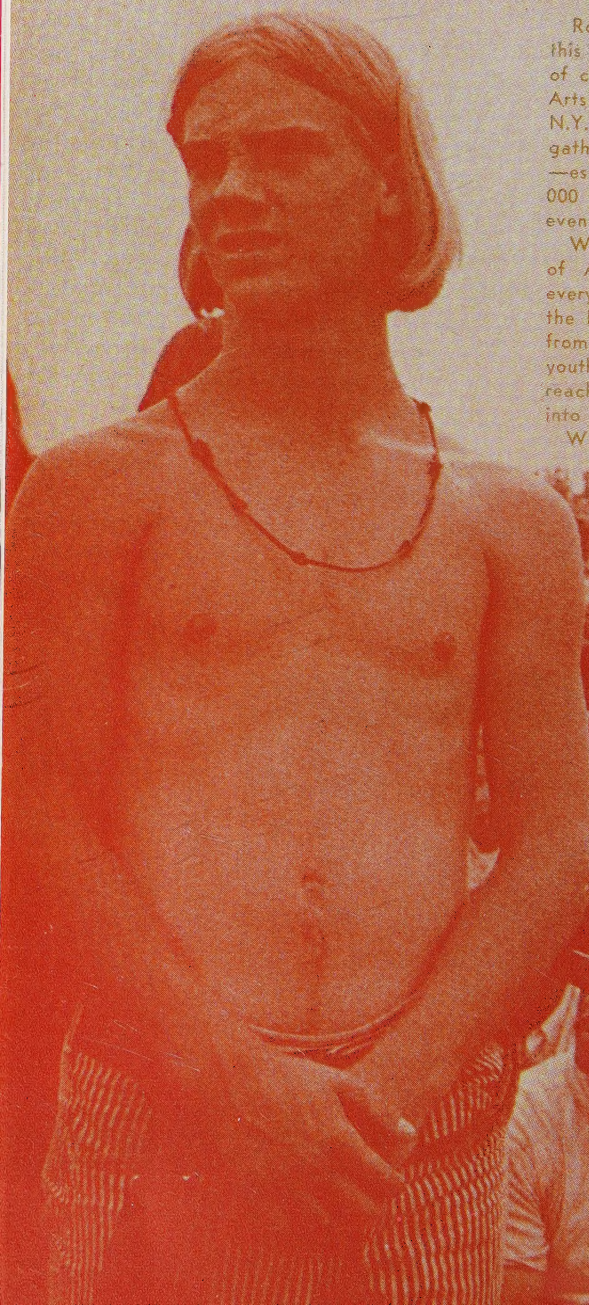


Youth

October 26,
1969





Rock music festivals were THE big so this past summer. And the most famous of course, was the Woodstock Music Arts Festival, held on a farm near Bethel, N.Y., August 15-17. It was the largest gathering of youth in the nation's history—estimates of the crowd vary from 300,000 to half a million. And opinions even more on what it all meant.

Was this truly "the dawning of the age of Aquarius"—the sign of higher things for every man as my brother? Or was it the beginning of "a retreat by the youth from politics into the sanctuary of their senses"? Was this reaching out to others, or a withdrawal into self?

Was this society's way of letting

kids have their kicks for a weekend in the country without letting the kids change things back home in the suburbs? Or was this society's waking up to the frightening possibility that these kids know something the adults don't know?

Was this an audience of passive consumers waiting dumbly in the rain to be entertained and turned on, or a congregation of gentle people living and loving, caring and sharing, and just being themselves?

Will these celebrants return to their hip ghettos, sterile schools, and boring jobs and do nothing but dream of Woodstock, or will this little taste of freedom and togetherness give birth to a demand for much more back home?

What brought these youth together? Was it music? Was it drugs? Was it the place to be? Or was it something else? Were these Woodstockers typical of youth today? What happened? YOUTH invited four who were at Woodstock to report their experiences and thoughts. (Three are under 20; one is over 20.) We've also quoted some teens who weren't there and some reporters who were.

What did Woodstock mean to you?

CREDITS: Shelley Rustin, 2, 13, 15, 18, 21, 24, 25; Rowland Scherman (from Bethel), 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 22, 26, 28, 31; Wide World Photos, 5, 23; Charles Galewood, 16; Ashley James (from Bethel), 29. Cover art by Jim Wilson.



Youth /

Volume 20

Number 19

October 26, 1969

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St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

YOUTH magazine
is published
for high school young people
of the
United Church of Christ
and
The Episcopal Church
An **Horizons** edition is published
for young people of the
Church of the Brethren
YOUTH is also
recommended for use
among young people of the
Anglican Church of Canada

YOUTH magazine is published every other week throughout the year (except during July and August, when monthly) by the United Church Press. The *Horizons* Edition is distributed to Brethren youth by the General Board—Church of the Brethren.

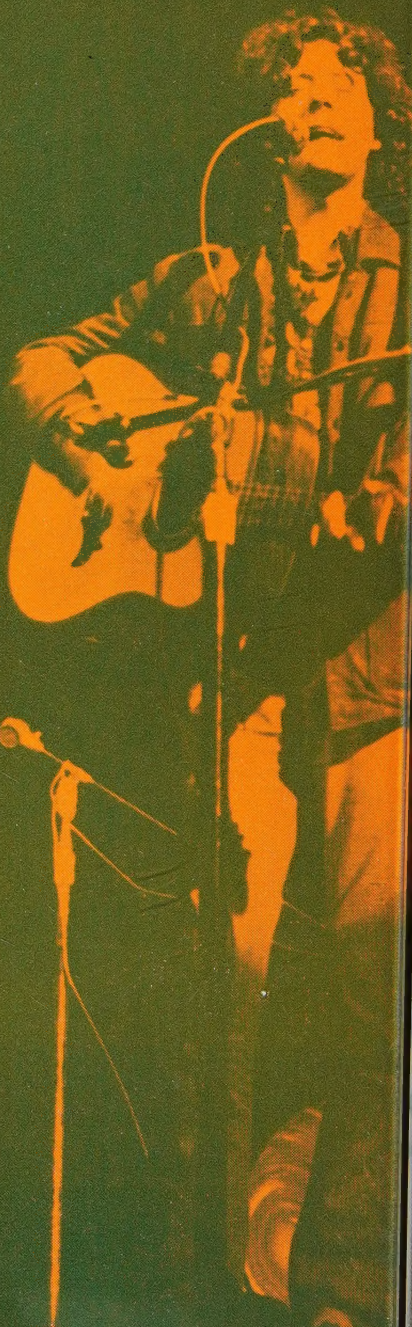
Publication office: 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63103. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage, provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 30, 1943.

Subscription rates: Single subscriptions, \$3.00 a year. Group rates, three or more to one address, \$2.40 each. Single copies, 25 cents each, double issues, 50 cents.

Subscription offices: *United Church of Christ:* Division of Publication, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Episcopal Church:* Circulation Department, YOUTH magazine, Room 310, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Church of the Brethren:* General Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120.

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This issue of YOUTH magazine (including the cover) was designed by James Wilson.





**After a while, you want nothing ever to do again
with cars and trucks, they're nothing but a drag.**

—John Hilgerdt (east village other)



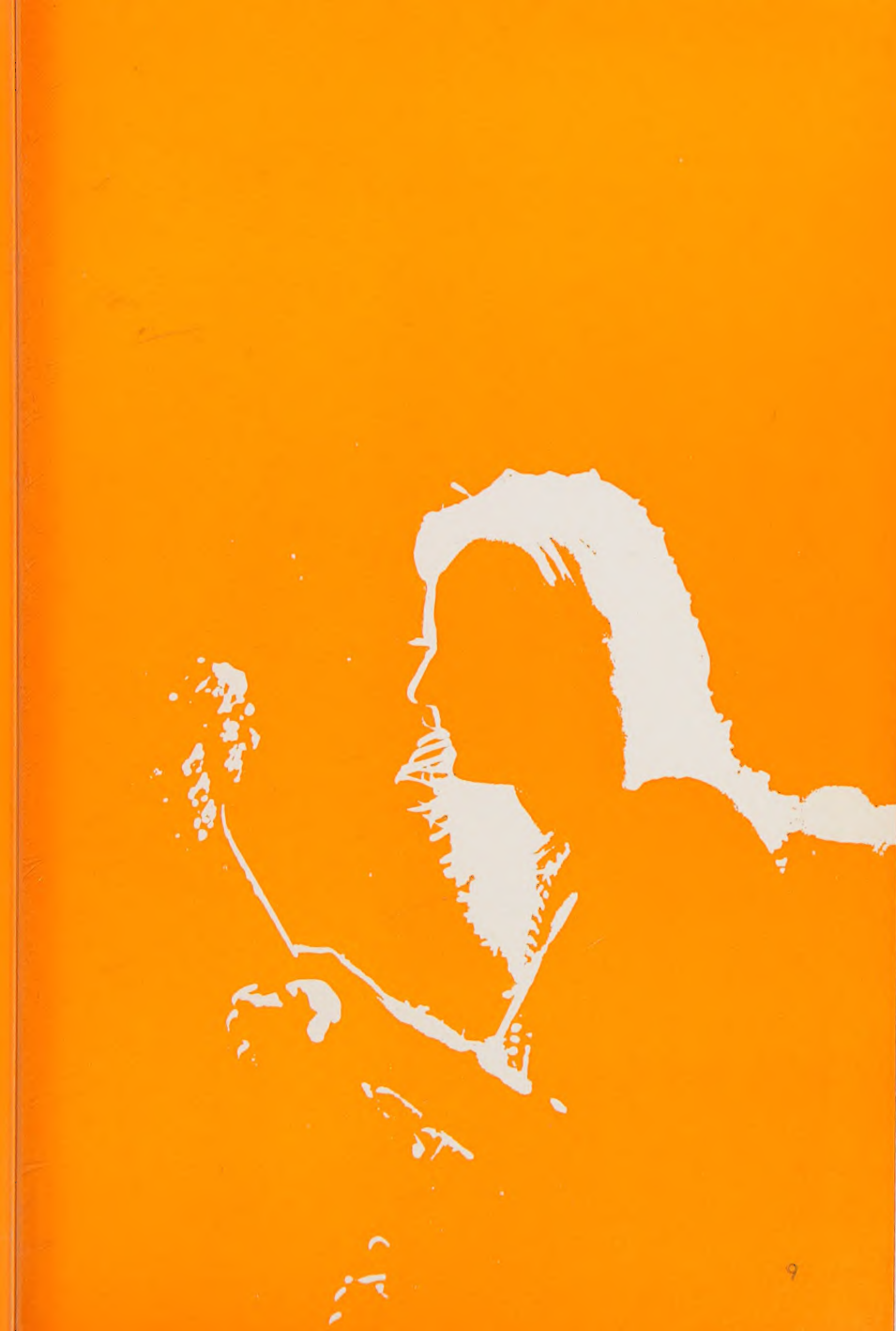
Mary Mead

"Three days of peace and music"
And we packed our tent and canned cans
Thinking of us
Five in a little car
Getting groovy on the way
My hair blew into my smile
The wind through the window as we
Finally neared it
Bumper to bumper with bearded, smiling warm and
distant faces
The cars kept coming and
The sky turned dark as we waited
With each other
It was hot, but people smiled, people cared
Patiently
We were there and the smoke-cooled vibrations
caressed us
People, our people—everywhere

The sun was bright and hot
Friday morning we walked—a long
Time 'til we found a place to sit
Stage in sight
We ate some of what we had and we shared it with
people and it tasted great!
For some reason
We shared
God, was it hot on the grass
My pants were sticky, my face sunburned
But so were we all and I learned
I learned to accept it
Keep it cool, don't let anything hassle you
We are all brothers we need each other
said the eyes, the hundreds
of eyes that met mine

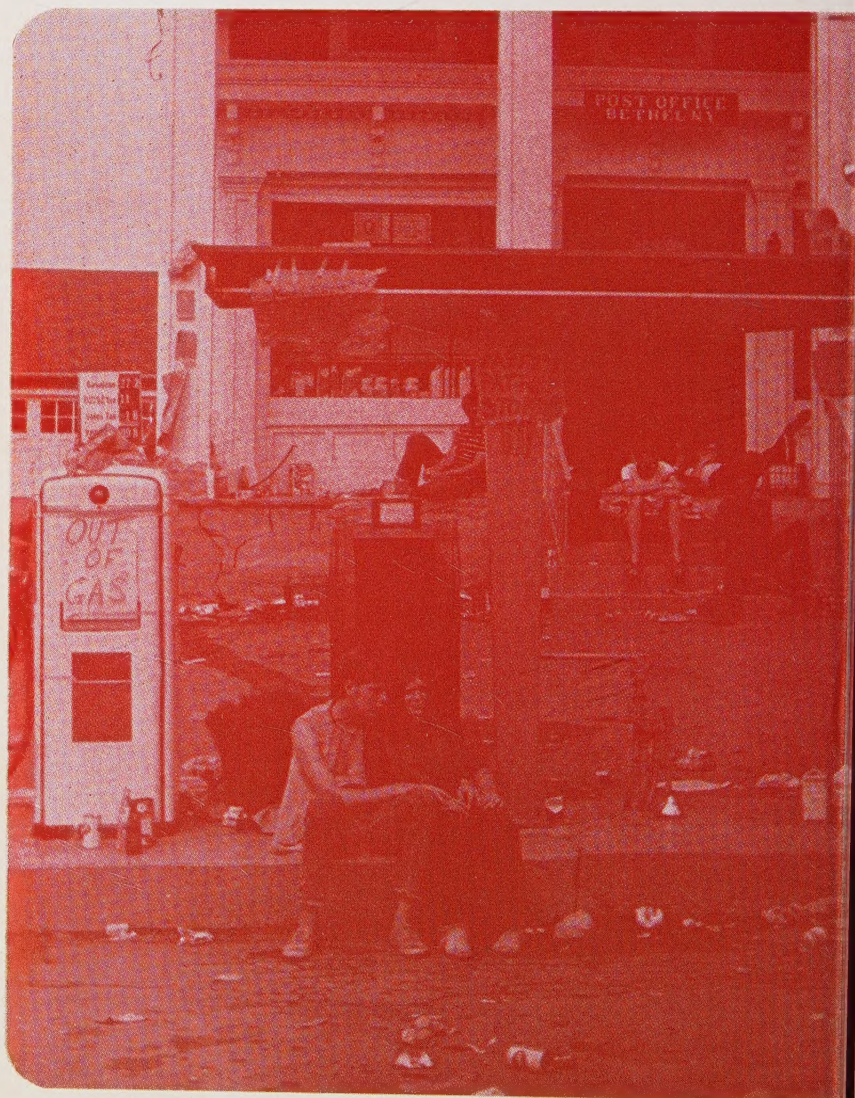
Slowly and deeply
What we came for happened
MUSIC!
Resounding through the people
Thousands . . . listening
And opening their mouths to sing or
Laugh maybe
Things just started happening

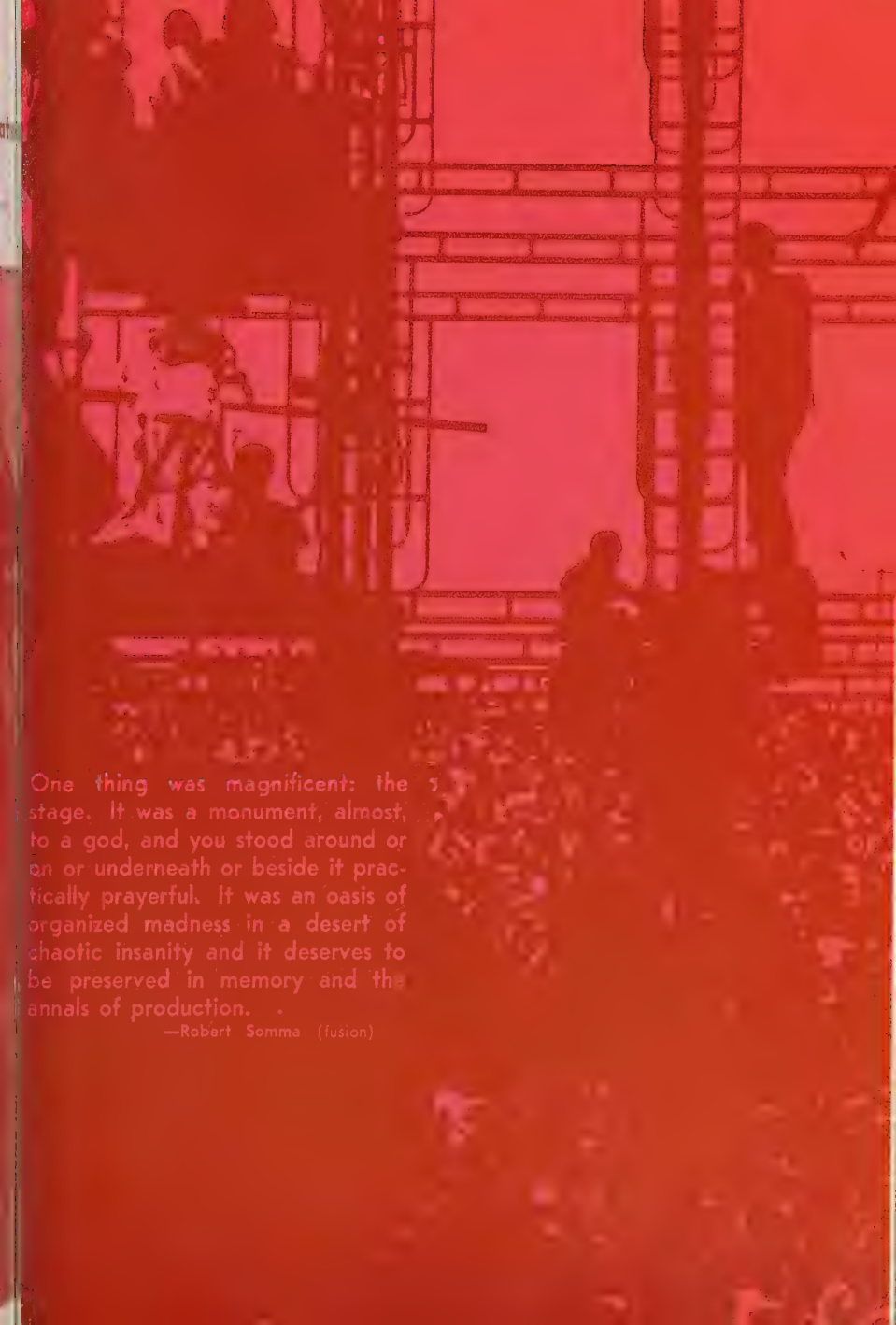
Like dancing like moving like being the beat like
turning like hearing like feeling what you
are like being what you are like being
filthy dirty and not caring just being
dirty and learning to enjoy it like caring
like loving like sharing that last cigarette
with a guy who just sort of came up and wanted it
And getting to know him
And caring
About him
Because bad things were happening too
Bad acid was taken and people
were killed
We were a city with cities' problems
And it rained and I cut my foot because I had to
go barefoot because the mud was too deep
to wear shoes and I didn't know what
was under that mud
toilets filled to the brim, water pipes empty,
no food, no shelter, rain, rain and more rain
But there was SUNSHINE and music and smiles
and beautiful people
And Sunday morning we got back into the car
Last slow smoke
I cried quietly all the way back
And didn't know if I was happy or sad



The system didn't change; it just accommodated the freaks for the weekend.

—Andrew Kopkind (Rolling Stone)





One thing was magnificent: the stage. It was a monument, almost, to a god, and you stood around or on or underneath or beside it practically prayerful. It was an oasis of organized madness in a desert of chaotic insanity and it deserves to be preserved in memory and the annals of production.

—Robert Somma (fusion)

*It keeps all those filthy dirty hippie-communist-anarchists off
the street.*

—Tom DeCoursey 18, McPherson, Kan.





There is a community of understanding, a sense of oneness, brotherhood expressed in the interaction of a gathering like this. Everyone is an individual and yet there is a collectiveness, a togetherness expressed in common joys.

—Chris Lassen, 18, Los Angeles, Calif.



There is a growing numbers of parents who, either through neglect, ignorance, or lack of available information, are simply not aware of what rock festivals are all about. They allow their children to attend them, unwittingly exposing their youngsters to situations which can seriously endanger their physical and moral lives.

—The Catholic Northwest Progre

It's unreal. I'm wet, fed-up, tired, and it's beautiful.

—Al Rich, 22, Montreal



Whether or not to encourage such festivals in the future, have no opinions. But it is one way to get some publicity for your farm.

—Alta Ann Simon, 17, Roseton, Vt.





Peter Young:



My three days of music and music began early in the morning on Friday, with a group of

in hope of arriving early in the afternoon.

We got off the New York highway about 30 miles east of the festival site and began to find

the festival site. We were looking for a place to camp, but the area was so crowded that we decided to leave the site and find a place to camp elsewhere.

away from the site. So we decided to sneak into White Lake from the south and by-pass the jam-up. We managed to get with the flow of traffic and arrived at the festival site, so

than freaky clothes and hair, that one girl's "Ban the Bra" but was being obeyed by some

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handle a crowd that big. We were in a pretty grassy spot, but a slight rise blocked our view of the stage and made it kind of hard to hear some of the soft folk music. We made the best of it and stretched out on our groundcloths.

Even though there were 300,000 people around me, I didn't feel lonely at all. A guy came up to me and asked if we had information about the location of the peace demonstration. I told him that the music attracted us to the show, but rather interested myself in the peace demonstration.

A number of the kids were smoking grass; couples were compensating for the cold air; and one group was playing an impromptu show with guitars and flutes. A Hare Krishna follower, complete with shaved head, flowing robe, finger cymbals, and conch shell, came begging for money. One long-haired freak came tripping (OOH!) through the crowd with a small box yelling, "Peanuts, popcorn, mescaline." He found quite a number of popcorn-lovers.

When it started to drizzle about midnight, four of us decided to go back to the campsite and make sure everything was dry for the night. HAH! No such luck. Right after we left, it started pouring. With only one small tarp to protect us, we gave up comfort for speed (don't read anything into that) and hopped onto somebody's car for the last mile. One cat caught a cold on the way back to the tent, but in a car; and if it wasn't for all the work we had to do drying out

the tent (we left the windows open)—we'd all be dead from pneumonia.

Brilliant planners that we were, no one remembered to get the keys for any of the four cars so we could get blankets and sleeping bags. Luckily, I had driven the last stretch in one of the cars and still had the keys, so we huddled together with one bag and two blankets.

When I woke up in the morning, our battalion had moved to the—
—and myself, and those guys who hadn't had a chance to set up their own tents. The sun was shining brightly, everything was dry, and the presence of warm food had everyone in good spirits. But, of course, the sun does scorch! I felt as if I had to become a neighbor's fire to get back happiness and spirit (the E. Coli, I mean!).

All but five of the group were leaving for New York City Saturday morning, some having come only for the Friday fest —and, the rest discouraged by the weather and the time—only five. Some got out of bed and set ourselves to the task of survival for the next few days.

We almost lost the idea of it, more than of hitting, so we decided to make a trip to get some supplies. It was raining and a pretty good deal of people, a couple of many of songs, a can of spaghetti, and two packages of frankfurters, along with some candy was all the food we took. A couple of people had a tent and a couple of blankets, and we dried out our equipment.

The sun was burning up everyone and some of the locals too. In

vantage of the festival goers by selling water, selling soda and beer at worse prices than a ballpark, and chasing people out of "their" shade.

But the spirit of the Festival spread and the townfolk were leaving running water hoses in their yards. Two girls were buying ice and passing it out free to hot passersby. We were grateful to give a contribution so that they could continue their kindness.

We finally made it to the site, but found it quite muddy from the night before. We found a spot in good sight of the stage and in excellent hearing range. But, more trouble—a water truck at the top of the hill sprang a leak and a river of mud 30 feet wide flowed right through the middle of the grounds. Kids jumped to grab logs for barricades, others pulled up grass to fill in gaps, and others caught cans that were thrown to help build dams. The dams really worked!

We managed a can of hot soup and a couple of cold franks and drank a little of the chlorinated water that was provided. We just relaxed and enjoyed the fantastic music, the sense of togetherness, and the absence of cops.

I caught a little bit of sleep during the night, enough to keep me going another day. One girl who was with us went off with two friends, so there were only four of us now—Steve, Amy, Morley, and I. Herman, of Radio Station WMMR-FM in Philadelphia who emceed the entire affair, made an announcement that free breakfast was available at some of the camp-

grounds. Morley and I hiked over and got some of the stuff—a mixture of grains, seeds, and raisins—very nutritious and quite tasty at the time. We checked out some of the head shops on the way back and I picked up some leather earrings for that "sartin swag someone" of mine.

We just lolled around waiting for the day's concerts to begin. Morley went swimming in one of the lakes; Steve and Amy caught up on their sleep; and I burnt myself to a crisp in the sun.

Some guys came on stage and led the throng in yoga breathing exercises which I found quite envigorating. Joe Cocker finally started the show about 2 o'clock, but he stayed for about an hour, because all hell broke loose from the sky. You didn't care where you were, who you were with—you just huddled together under tarps, ponching blankets, or even garbage bags that had been passed out. Even one got soaked.

While the group waited (nobody left), kids slid in the nude down the hill to the mud. They banged rhythmically on cans and danced. When somebody hooked a turntable into the sound system, they sang and danced. The Air Force got a standing ovation for writing a peace symbol in the sky and dropping thousands of daisies from a helicopter. Herman said the show would go on as soon as it was safe for the musicians to play in. Meanwhile, he introduced Mr. Yasgur, the owner of the farm. Before he said one word, 500,000 (th

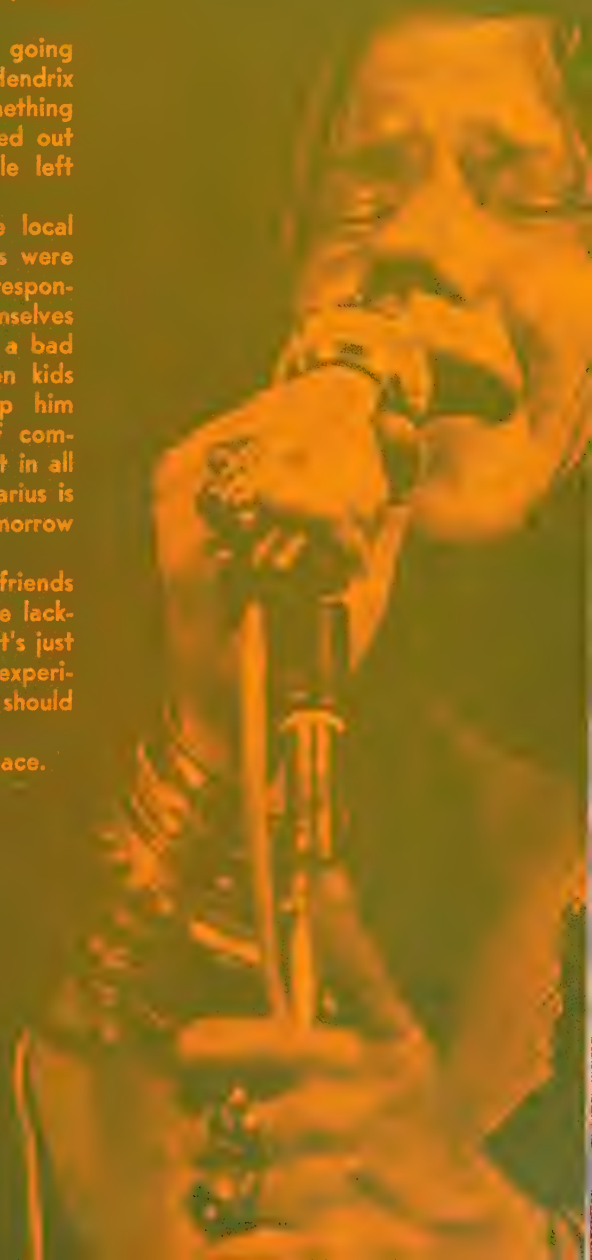
crowd had grown) people rose to their feet and cheered for a full five minutes. He praised the kids for their stamina, their spirit, and their self-control.

The music finally got going again, ending up with Jimi Hendrix at an 8 a.m. concert. Something else! The management passed out trash bags and those people left helped clean up a bit.

All I can say is that the local people were great, the cops were beautiful, the kids showed responsibility by controlling themselves (one kid near us was having a bad trip, cried for help, and ten kids rushed to his side to help him through it), and a spirit of community and peace flowed out in all directions. The Age of Aquarius is already here. I'd go back tomorrow and go through it all again.

One thing though—my friends who didn't go all seem to be lacking something now. Maybe it's just going through a fantastic experience. Maybe Woodstock should happen everywhere.

Peace.



*...I found there's no correlation between a clean-shaven cheek
and morality and there's no correlation between long hair and
immorality.*

—Joseph Paul Kimble, Police Chief, Beverly Hills, Ca



You walk by them and they smile and say hello. They raise their hands in the sign of peace. They shout "peace" out the windows of their cars. Maybe they know something that we don't. Maybe we should begin to listen.

—a local resident whose lawn was used as a campsite





Two impressions: One is that Woodstock is a revelation of things to come. The conditions present—hunger, cold, overcrowding, drugs—will be felt by all of us soon or later. These kids had the legendary square yard of earth that will be all the room open to them soon. Second, it was the world's largest pig pen complete with some of the dirtiest pigs around, and tons of mud for them to play in. . . . Woodstock was a passing away of what is good and true and Godlike, and one giant step toward the second coming of Christ and God's ruling us from here on earth.

—Dave Heidemann, 17, Brookfield, W

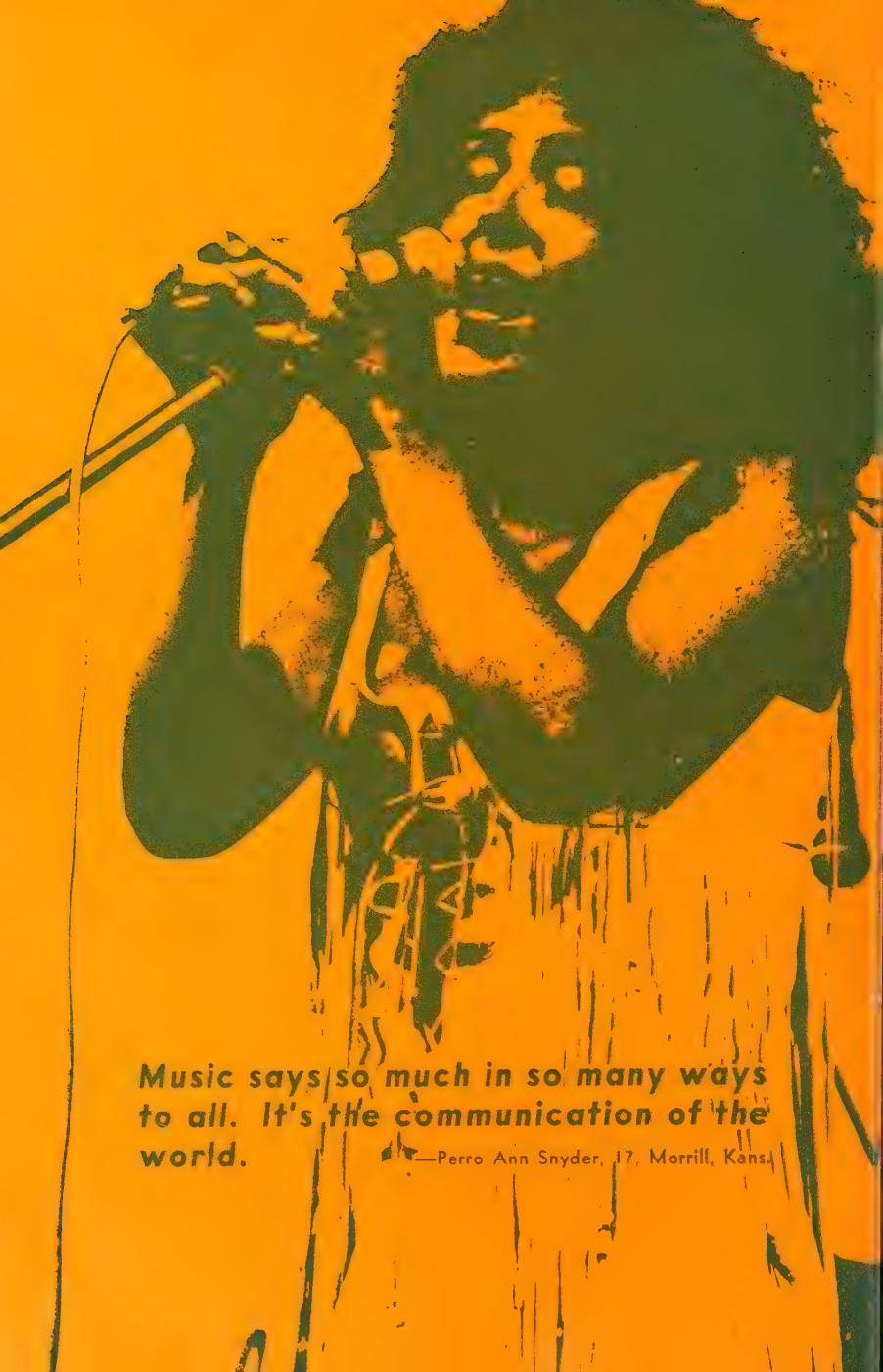
I think it scared the devil out of the older generations. They awakened to the fact we are more than talk. We have numbers and won't be told "because I say so."

—Paula Schloneger, 18, Plymouth, Ind.



Bill Comeau:





**Music says so much in so many ways
to all. It's the communication of the
world.**

—Perro Ann Snyder, 17, Morrill, Kans.



feel it probably started out as being a good thing, but it got out of hand. The people felt they weren't doing any harm. However, many became ill due to smoking pot and needed hospital treatment.

—Marilynn Akau, 17, Kula, Hawaii

Mark Banfield:

The first time I heard of the Woodstock Music and Art Festival, I was impressed—the promise of so many big-name groups in one week-end seemed bound to be the highlight of my summer. I made arrangements for transportation and ordered tickets for the three-day Aquarian Exposition. At noon on Friday, the opening day, five friends and I set out for White Lake. We arrived in the town at 2:30. From there it was a slow and monotonous two hour haul to the hillside site from the area where we had had to abandon our overheated car, still five miles from the concert stage.

As we locked the car and shouldered our provisions we were amazed by the friendliness and helpfulness of all the people we encountered. After a few minutes we were growing weary from the overburdening load. Besides an ample supply of food (our mothers, despairing of forcing extra clothing upon us, had insisted on at least supervising the food boxes), we had brought a tent, sleeping bags, a small charcoal stove (and charcoal), and an ice chest with perishable items. Several jugs of water which had tasted so good on the drive up were nearly empty, so we had finished them and left the empty jugs with the car. We had stopped for a moment's rest when a car slowed and someone from inside

shouted "Hop on the back!" The car moved almost as slowly as I had walked through the gathering crowd, but eventually we came to an open spot where we decided to pitch our tent. With the help of some nearby campers, the tent was erected in time for the first concert.

We weaved our way through throngs of people and finally settled down to watch and listen in a remarkably good spot near the scaffolding which held the lights for the evening performances. (The most remarkable thing about the spot was that it was empty. We took our chances—every morning at six a guy was posted to save those seats for the next concert!) The air smelled heavy with the marijuana nearly everyone used for a deep appreciation of the sights and sounds. Upon speaking to the people sitting nearby, we seemed to become friends united in a feeling of brotherhood and benevolence.

As the music started everyone swayed and listened intently. There was a total audience involvement which continued through the night and didn't let up until four the next morning, when the concert ended on the same note of excitement with which it had begun. There was even greater anticipation for the next day's music.

The next two days were dappled with heat, drizzling rain, and oozing red mud, but even this failed to dampen the hearts of the people who had come to Woodstock for peace and music. No one's determination to find this peace was about to be suppressed by the e

ments. As food ran low, we found ourselves cooking breakfast for all who passed by . . . one drizzly morning found more than a dozen friends hunched together with us under tent flaps and sleeping bags as I pulled soggy eggs and scorched toast from the glowing charcoal to paper plates until there was no more.

In White Lake, then the third largest city in New York State, there was complete absence of violence despite accusations from the older generation that these long-haired youths were to be the downfall of America. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Ravi Shankar, Arlo Guthrie, and so many more sang and played their songs of peace. In this town, now our town, we were all free to "do our own thing" with-

out fear of being ostracized and/or ridiculed; for the feeling there was to do what you like as long as you don't impede on another's happiness, to be yourself. What is to us beauty and truth the Establishment has tagged as immoral and obscene. I am dubious to believe that a group half this size over 30 and present in the same conditions could experience such an Exposition without some turmoil and injustice.

As we returned to our homes in a small town in southern New York State, the old familiar calls sounded again . . . the wolf whistles . . . the pointed fingers . . . a cry, "Hey, are you a boy or a girl!" I'm a human being,^o Mister. You won't understand Woodstock, and I don't understand you.



